JOHN BURROUGHS STILL YOUNG IN HEART AT 75

Dean of Interpreters of Delights Out of Doors Celebrated His Birthday Last Week.

John Burroughs was 75 last Wednesday. The dean of the interpretors of delights out of doors has himself kept a bit of the youth of the things he has written about. During this last year, he told a visitor the other day, he has done more work than he ever did before. In all he has finished more than ten articles, most of them for magazines, on outdoor subjects, on themes imaginative and themes speculative.

He celebrated his birthday among his friends in a little bungalow at Pelham, N. Y. Thirty writers and naturalists and just plain men of affairs went up to Pelham to wish "J. B.," as he calls himself and as he likes to be called, the happiness of many returning birthdays and to talk over old times. As they left the station at Pelham they could feel that the vernal bill poster had been about with his advance notices of spring's annual appearance. Along the road to the bungalow there were faint hints of what was to come, a dim fuzziness of tree branches, a clear call in the wind and the whistle of a boy going to the post office for the mail. In a thicket outside the house where Mr. Burroughs is staying the writer's favorite bird, the sweet throated song sparrow, was celebrating with song the birthday of the man who has written so well of it.

White Bearded but Young.

The thirty could not for the life of them find much change in the appearance of the straight figure of the man who greeted them. His long white beard reminds one of the pictures of some of the early New England writers, most of whom he knew and about all of whom he has interesting stories to tell. His complexion is as ruddy as was that of the whistling boy they passed on the road, and he moves about with a brisk step that makes you agree with him that he is feeling as spry as ever.

Mr. Burroughs spent the winter in the South. Most of the time he was at Athens, Ga. Every morning he spent hard at work writing. In the afternoon he would take a five mile tramp or a ride. It was cold enough to give zest to his work, cold without the bitterness of his Catskill winters, and he did a lot of work.

School children would often go to his home to hear "the gospel according to J. B.," as he said with a twinkle in his eye. A Borroughs Nature Study Club was formed some time ago with branches all over the country, and Mr. Burroughs was rather pleased to find that the idea had taken hold of the youth of Athens.

Mocking Bird Overrated.

One of the things that interested Mr. Burroughs most in his Southland stay was the cardinal bird. Eloquent and beautiful were his adjectives for this bird. But the mocking bird, this favorite of the Southern poets, found no admirer in the Northern visitor.

"A vastly overrated bird," said Mr. Burroughs. "He is so theatrical, he droops his wings and poses and is, in short, a mere clown, a mimic. Our brown thrasher has a song a little like the mocking bird's but vastly superior."

On his way back from Athens Mr. Burroughs stopped off at Washington to browse around in his old haunts. He was Treasury Clerk in Washington from 1864 to 1884. It was while there that he wrote his first book on outdoor themes. He called it "Wake-Robin." There too he met the man whom he defended so sturdily, the man whom he came to know so well and to love so deeply, Walt Whitman.

He told of his first meeting with Whitman and the last, and when he spoke of the poet it was with such sincere admiration that you could not help but catch some of it and thrill a little at the picture of the poet that he drew.

Whitman in War Time.

At the close of a spring day in Washington in 1864 young Burroughs was introduced to Whitman, then a hospital nurse, at the corner of Fourteenth street and Pennsylvania avenue. General Burnside's old Ninth Corps was marching through the capital on its way to adventures in the Wilderness, where Grant's army was face to face with Lee's.

"As the ranks of blue swept steadily past us," said Mr. Burroughs, "I noticed a break in one of the companies and in a moment three or four soldiers were crowding aroung my new friend calling him 'Walt,' throwing their arms about his neck and begging him to go with them a little way.

"Whitman with his arms flung across blue shoulders would walk a short distance and then rejoin me. This happened time after time. The men who broke ranks were those to whom Whitman had ministered in the hospitals.

"He had done domestic tasks for them, had written home and eased anxieties and cheered the downhearted and as he moved serene and comforting down the rows of cots the men had come to know and love him with the deepest sort of love. Why, several of the men that were marching out into the thick of the fighting actually kissed Whitman and almost wept when he had to drop back and leave them."

Last Visit to the Poet.

That was the first time he saw the poet and the last was a few months before Whitman's death at Camden, N. J. When the two friends met Whitman already knew that he was soon to die and the sight of the big man huddled up in his chair with a shawl thrown over his shoulders in surroundings that were squalid—for the room was in the greatest disorder with books piled three feet high about the corners—moved Burroughs deeply. Whitman saw that he was affected and he put out his hand.

"It's all right, John; it's all right," he said.

"Although Whitman knew that he was to die," said Mr. Burroughs, "he did not fear death; in fact I think that toward the end he rather longed for it. When he was still able to be about he used to go out to the tomb that he had built and lean against it, and once I heard him say, 'I wish I was there now.'

"He had the greatest belief in the immortality of the soul and sure confidence that he was to journey to the spheres."

Mr. Burroughs is sure that Whitman's popularity is growing slowly, as it should.

"His name now is not the bugaboo that it used to be when I first met him and when you could hardly mention him in polite society," said Mr. Burroughs. "His poems have the lasting merit of deep sincerity and the lyrical touch.

"As I have said somewhere of Whitman, he is like a mountain; as you get away from him in point of time and perspective the features soften down and you get the true beauty.

"In appearance he gave you the idea of great gentleness and a soothing magnetism. His skin was soft like a woman's. His head had an antique beauty. He looked like the elemental man, the father of us all. The only man who had a head at all like Whitman's was Edward Everett Hale. He, too, had Whitman's beauty and simplicity."

Emerson's Last Days.

From Whitman the reminiscence went to Emerson, and at the mention of the name Mr. Burroughs smiled.

"The first piece of writing I did was when I was 28 years old," he said. "The *Atlantic Monthly* accepted an essay of mine called 'Expression.' In those days articles that appeared in the *Atlantic* were unsigned.

"I was an ardent disciple of Emerson's and I wrote subconsciously in Emersonian style. So well had I imitated him that even 'Poole's Index' put that essay down as one of Emerson's and Dr. Hill of the English department at Harvard quoted from it in one of his lectures, giving credit to Emerson.

"The musk of Emerson was on the garments of all of us young men who were writing at that time and even now I sometimes get a whiff of it in my writings."

He met Emerson in the last days of the Concord philosopher. He met him once at West Point, where Emerson—of all people—was on a visiting board, and again at the famous breakfast given to Oliver Wendell Holmes at the Buckingham Hotel at Boston.

Emerson could not speak to us for his mind was breaking down and he was losing his memory of men and faces," Mr. Burroughs said. "He sat there silent, with a wonderful look in his deep, far seeing astral eyes. Whittier took me up to introduce him. He did not remember me. Whittier said: Thee knows him, but when I started to ask Emerson about Thoreau he seemed to understand, for he beckoned to a common friend to come and tell me about him."

At that breakfast were all the gods and demigods of literature, with Emerson looking the most godlike and Holmes greeting every one with some sally, "Dropping sparks on them," said Mr. Burroughs.

Writes to Please Himself.

Mr. Burroughs spoke of his own work. He said that his essay in the *Atlantic* set him to thinking. He had written on a speculative theme and was not absolutely sure of his ground. He decided then and there that he would write of things with which he had acquaintance.

On his farm at Roxbury in the quiet of the hills of Delaware county, New York, he had come to an intimate knowledge of rural life and the beasts and birds around him. In 1864 he was employed as a Treasury clerk. His particular duty was to watch over one of the Treasury vaults where was kept some $50,000,000, a responsible position but one that did not take up all his time. The contrast of his surroundings set him dreaming of the sights and sounds of the farm and he decided to record some of his impressions. He used his spare moments in writing "Wake-Robin."

The things that he has written he has done to please himself, says Mr. Burroughs. He has had no thought for the popular thing, for what the public wanted, but he wrote out of his heart.

So if you are beginning a literary career Mr. Burroughs's advice to you is to write with sincerity of things that you know about and he thinks that the public will appreciate the result, as it recognises sincerity in anything.

Present Day Literature.

Mr. Burroughs does not have to do much rewriting of his outdoor work, but when it comes to speculative and imaginative themes, and of late they have come to be the major part of his work, he finds that here he has "something to sweat over."

"When I come out on the boundless oceans of imagination I find it necessary to rewrite for a better expression," he said. "If I let a thing lie I can often see where I have missed some fine shading of thought. Sometimes I burn the whole manusoript up and begin all over again. I reckon all literary men do that."

Now it must be set down here that Mr. Burroughs can see no first grade writers coming up. He is not by any means satisfied with the present condition of literature. When he spoke of Emerson and Whitman and Whittier and the rest, he said:

"I suppose we shall never have any like them."

He holds the brief of the older generation against the materialism of the times. Some one spoke of the next poet and Mr. Burroughs shook his head.

"It will be a long time before we have a great poet," he said, "the spirit of the age is against poetry. It is against idealism. So thoroughly are we absorbed in material things that we can dream no dreams, see no visions. If we are to have singers we are to have them in spite of materialism and science."

He does not believe in the "poet of the machines."

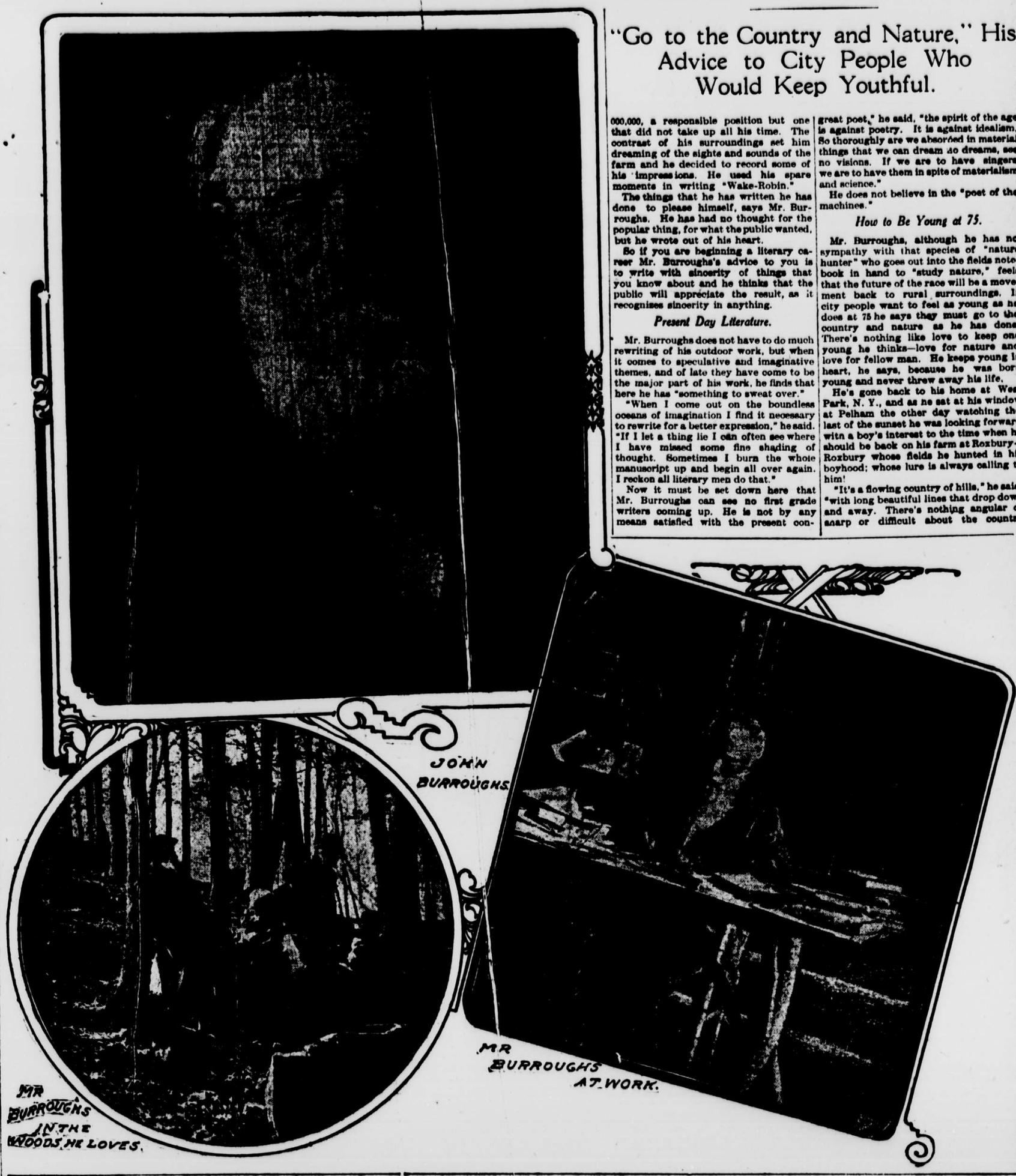
How to Be Young at 75.

Mr. Burroughs, although he has no sympathy with that species of "nature hunter" who goes out into the fields notebook in hand to "study nature," feels that the future of the race will be a movement back to rural surroundings. If city people want to feel as young as he does at 75 he says they must go to the country and nature as he has done. There's nothing like love to keep one young he thinks—love for nature and love for fellow man. He keeps young in heart, he says, because he was born young and never threw away his life.

He's gone back to his home at West Park, N. Y., and as he sat at his window at Pelham the other day watching the last of the sunset he was looking forward with a boy's interest to the time when he should be back on his farm at Roxbury—Roxbury whose fields he hunted in his boyhood; whose lure is always calling to him!

"It's a flowing country of hills," he said, "with long beautiful lines that drop down and away. There's nothing angular or snarp or difficult about the country around Roxbury."

There he has his cabin, which he calls "Woodchuck Lodge," and he knows the sunny side of a hayrick where he can lie and be lazy and look out through the chinks in the wall across the fields that will be feeling the touch of spring, the fields where he first learned the ways of birds and beasts and the tender mysteries of nature.



PIONEER MISSOURI PREACHERS.

Went Armed to Church—Laughing Devils or Sleepy Ones.

From the St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

Nearly every pioneer preacher in Missouri was as expert in the use of the rifle as any of the laymen. Services were usually held in a neighbor's cabin. Notice of a "meeting" was promptly and generally circulated and the settlers attended, uniformly bringing their rifles to guard against possible surprises or to obtain game on the way to or from the service.

The practice of carrying firearms was not abandoned or suspended even on the Sabbath. An old pioneer states that on one occasion religious services were held in Saline county when the preacher proclaimed the gospel of peace with his hand and his clothing covered with blood from a deer that he had killed and butchered on his way to the meeting that morning.

The pioneer preachers labored without money and without price. They gained their subsistence as did their neighbors, by the rifle and by their daily toil in the clearings and the corn fields.

The Rev. Justinian Williams, Methodist, and the Rev. Peyton Nowlin and the Rev. Thomas Kinney, Baptists, were the first preachers in Saline county. They preached on Edmonson's Creek and in the Big Bottom. "Old Man Nowlin," as he was called, was a sedate gentleman, dry as to manners and sermons, but with a kind heart and good intention.

His colleague Kinney, however, was of a jovial disposition and very popular. He was without literary attainments, but invariably provoked his congregation to laughter. Nowlin took him to task upon one occasion for his levity. Kinney answered:

"Well, I'd rather preach to laughing devils than to sleepy ones, as you do. You make them sleep and I make them laugh. My congregations will pass yours on the road to heaven. I bet you a coonskin they will."

Censor for Cafe Songs.

From Denver Municipal Facts.

The order of the fire and police board prohibiting vocal music in cafes has been modified to the extent that songs will be permitted if they are not of the suggestive kind. The board has appointed a censor to see that the singers keep within bounds.

MILLIONS SPENT YEARLY TO SAFEGUARD WORKMEN

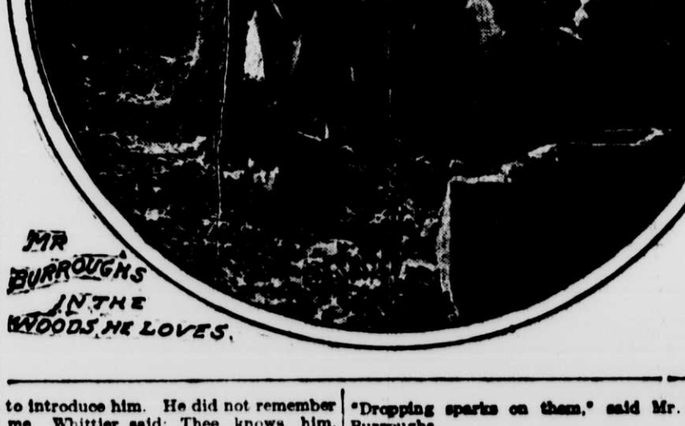
Continued from Eighth Page.

safety, neat books bound in red, the danger color. The Illinois Steel Company's book of safety rules has 122 pages of instructions in it, beginning with general advice from President E. J. Buffington, and going into exhaustive detail about prevention of all possible accidents. The book is so indexed that any man can easily find directions and read up on his particular trade. The National Tube Company issues an exhaustive pamphlet of instructions and specifications on the building of safe scaffolds and the care necessary for working in high places. Special departments, like the converting department of the Illinois Steel Company, issue small books on how to work safely in handling dangerous materials. Whole books on how to handle high explosives are distributed broadcast. All men are instructed about the perils of switching yards and taught to Stop! Look! Listen!

Must Be Spectacular.

Mr. Close says that the hardest thing to combat in safety work is not any element in the three usually recognized sources of accidents; faulty equipment and conditions due to the stinginess or ignorance or disregard of the owner of the plant; outright carelessness and thoughtlessness on the part of the workman himself and potential dangers inherent in the very nature of the materials handled, perils which cannot possibly be foreseen but which can gradually be overcome as longer experience uncovers the physical causes of those worst of all accidents. Those things are easily handled, Mr. Close says. The Steel Corporation, for instance, eventually will remove all faulty equipment whatsoever and make working conditions just as safe as they can be made. It will also succeed in so training its workmen that they will have the habit of watchfulness and precaution ingrained in them. And its chemists and mechanical engineers will some day know all there is to be known of the dangers in hot metal, gases, electricity, &c. The hard thing to fight is the workman's trade practice. That he clings to like a gentleman to his honor.

The railroad safety bureau may insist until the crack of doom that it is perilous to mount the fender step of a switch engine from the centre of the track, and almost equally dangerous from the side of the track, and that the only safe way is to make the engine come to a full stop before mounting. But the brakeman would say that he wasn't a railroad man if he couldn't mount the step from the centre of the track, swing up to the back steps of the caboose whirring by at twenty miles an hour, make couplings at remarkable speed and all that sort of fancy trick business. Those tricks are his technic and he defends them stanchly. It is well nigh impossible to tell him, as the railroads do in their little books on safety, that in 1911 2,317 men lost their left legs by doing just those things in that way and that in 1910 535 men were killed by mistaking a black hose hanging down from the locomotive cab for the hand rail. The man who works at hazardous trades is by nature a daring man; he loves danger; he invariably prefers the more difficult and more dangerous way of doing his work. It is more spectacular. It has more style to it. But Mr. Close does say that he and the other safety specialists are doing everything in their power to make the new, safe, cautious manner of working as popular and fashionable as the old reckless way.



In connection with its safety work the Steel Corporation has trained many of its men, particularly the men in its mines, in all that medical science has discovered about "first aid to the injured." Fake mines are rigged up above ground, a dummy is hid in a dark corner, the ground is strewn with obstacles and the whole place pumped full of smoke and vile gases.

Then the men who are being trained in rescue work are given the signal. On go their helmets and the search for the victim begins. Thus they are taught exactly what to do in emergencies until practically all of the men on the work can be relied upon to keep their heads in cases of explosions, caveins, &c. Hospitals are fitted up deep in the mines themselves so that injuries demanding instant treatment may be taken care of on the spot. In disasters of a wholesale character hospital cars are rushed to the scene to assist the regular hospitals. The physicians and surgeons employed are of the highest grade and every detail of nursing and attendance is scrupulously supervised.

At investigations of some serious accidents testifying workmen have been asked by the investigators what they recommended by way of prevention and the workmen have replied: "Fire that man. Discharge that man; he's reckless." That in regard to men working alongside them in the mills. The men have finally come to understand that one careless workman is a constant peril to any other man or gang of men who work with him or anywhere near him. There is a safety slogan which covers the case: "Foremen: Carelessness is dangerous. If workmen insist on being careless discharge them." Much as the Steel Corporation values its men as so much capitalised muscle it regards the careless man as worse than no man at all. He is not an asset. He is one man who must be got rid of at any cost in order to save not only material, machinery, organization and discipline but what is far more important, even commercially, the lives and limbs of the men who work with him at the processes of steel making.

SUICIDES IN JAPAN.

Hara-Kiri Out of Date; Modern Method, Jumping Into Volcanoes.

From the Pall Mall Gazette.

The Japanese are now busily debating the ethics of suicide. The case out of which the controversy has arisen is that of the station master at Moji, who because of a mishap to the imperial train which made it necessary for the Emperor to adjourn for half an hour to a waiting room showed his repentance by throwing himself under the wheels of the express.

The station master's devotion having evoked a wave of popular admiration which took shape in a proposal to erect a monument to his memory, the nation has been rebuked by the president of the Kyushu University for thus glorifying an act of self-destruction; and the latter, finding himself out of tune with public opinion, has resigned his position.

It is a singular thing that among a people so cheerful as the Japanese suicide should be so common. Ten thousand destroy themselves every year in Japan, and the figures cannot be said to be diminishing. But hara-kiri as such is out of date.

The modern victims of the suicidal mania, when they do not throw themselves in front of a train, jump into the crater of an active volcano. Asama, in central Japan, and Aso-san, in Kyushu, have both acquired a sinister reputation in this respect.

It is, however, a disquieting sign of the times to find the student class resorting so largely to suicide—especially of the spectacular sort, and this, no doubt, is Dr. Yamakawa's motive in protesting against the exaltation of an act which the Christian world regards as a grievous sin.

ANCIENT SURGICAL OPERATIONS

Hippocrates Wrote of Trepanning—Use of Stone Implements.

From the London Standard.

There is no doubt that some rough form of surgery must have existed from very ancient times, but it is strange to find that so complex and delicate an operation as trepanning is one of the oldest.

So far as actual records go, Hippocrates gives us the earliest account. He wrote treatises on fractures, dislocations and wounds of the head, in which he described the method of procedure to be followed in the case of a fractured skull. His direction was to cut away a piece of bone so that the pressure on the brain might be relieved.

There are also records about this time and later of a file being used for this purpose, which at a time when anæsthetics were undreamed of must have been, to say the least, painful.

According to Dr. T. Rice Holmes, the operation of removing pieces of bone was performed long before historic times. The effects on the skull are easily seen after death and are visible so long as the bones are preserved.

From inspection of certain skulls of the later stone age in ancient Britain, Dr. Holmes has come to the conclusion that some of these had undergone the operation, which must have been performed with a stone implement.

Woman Doctors in Siberia.

Moscow correspondence London Standard.

A number of influential Siberians are petitioning the Ministry of Education in St. Petersburg to allow women to be admitted to the medical faculty in the University of Tobolsk. The petitioners point out that there is a wide field for women doctors in Siberia, where it is often difficult for settlers to get medical aid.

There are many Mohammedans in the country, and it is explained that only women doctors can come to their help in illness, as they do not permit men to see their wives and daughters Many women have entered the medical profession in Russia proper, and there are a great many women practising dentistry, a department of surgery which does not seem to have attractions for the English woman.